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70 Years
"A Partner in Conservation Since 1935"

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Transmitted via Email

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MINNESOTA BULLETIN NO. 300-5-48

SUBJECT: LTP – EQIP – 2006 PROGRAM

Purpose. To initiate the 2006 EQIP and Local Work Group process.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2005.

NRCS District Conservationists will again use Local Work Groups (LWG) as part of the locally-led process to formulate and implement a local Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 Environmental Quality Improvement Program (EQIP) program. In 2006 a new national ranking tool will be used by all states. This new ranking tool will be adjusted to reflect local priority issues. Starting the locally-led process now will prepare offices to implement the new ranking tool and facilitate an EQIP sign-up this fall or early winter.

For 2006 we have not established a cut-off date for scoring and ranking applications. Neither do we have the 2006 EQIP Practice Payment Docket. Nevertheless, offices can and should proceed to establish the foundation of their 2006 EQIP. Offices should expect the 2006 EQIP to be very similar to the 2005 EQIP.

2006 EQIP Groundwork Action Items:

1. **Solicit changes from field and areas for 2006 policies and cost-share docket.** State office bulletin will be transmitted in July.
2. **Conduct local listening sessions in August and September 2005.** Field offices coordinate with Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) to gather local input on resource concerns and priorities.
3. **Hold Local Work Group meetings.** The goal is to have LWG meetings completed by October 7, 2005. Again, coordinate with your SWCD. Have local input or listening sessions prior to, or in conjunction with the LWG meetings. Determine, prioritize, and record the local resource concerns that EQIP will address.
4. **Receive training on the new national EQIP ranking tool.** This training is tentatively scheduled for October. Local priorities will be incorporated into the new ranking tool.
5. **November 1, 2005** is the national goal to have the new ranking tool in place and ready for use in the 2006 sign-up process. Depending on this and the availability of funds, a late fall or early winter EQIP sign-up will be scheduled for Minnesota.

Questions should be directed to your respective ASTC (FO), or from the area level, to Tim Koehler, Assistant State Conservationist.

WILLIAM HUNT
State Conservationist

Enclosure

DIST: ASTC (FO)
DC
ARC
EQIP State Office Team